

What to Do With Europe

Joe Gould

IT is obvious that when this war ends some way must be found to protect peace-loving cannibals and head hunters from the blood lust of Europeans. I do not agree with those who believe that the whole continent should be dynamited and sunk beneath the waves. Of course this would be a permanent solution, but it is not very practical.

However, Europeans have proved that they are incapable of governing themselves. No one nation is able to take over the task of administration. This would also endanger



Joe Gould, sketched by Don Freeman

world peace. Europe must be divided into appropriate sections and each of these assigned to some other group for settlement and exploitation. This would be retribution for the past sins of the continent.

Ireland should be equally divided between the two Moslem sects which hate each other bitterly. This would perpetuate the tradition of bigotry which is so imbedded in the soil of the beautiful Emerald Isle.

Great Britain offers a problem. There are many claimants. Perhaps the most logical are the blacks of Jamaica and Barbados who have always been loud in their professions of loyalty to the Empire.

Scandinavia will get off lightly. They will be protected by the tribes of North American Indians. This is only fitting, for the Nordic superiority began when Lief Ericson brought back red-skins to improve the breed. These In-

dians were believed for many centuries to be descendants of the lost tribe of Israel. (But why bring that up?)

France will be ruled by the Tonkinese and the Senegalese. Holland will be assigned to the Javanese and Sumatrans. Belgium's rulers will come from the Congo. Spain, of course, will be handed back to the people of Morocco, and Italy will be the not too glamorous prize of Halie Selassie. The Islands of the Mediterranean will be rejuvenated by Polyesian and Mironesian blood. Afghans and Indians from Pernesian Alps will control Switzerland and the Balkans and nomadic races such as Arabs will wander over the rest of the continent.

At first sight it would seem appropriate to give Germany to the Jews, but even better it would be to hand it over to the followers of Father Divine thus conciliating the German instinct for supernatural leadership.

The World of Moloch

WE seem to be approaching the "era of integration," an age where large economic and political units are massed power blocs, and culture is pulverized into *faith* to serve as a unifying concept and spiritual dress. The Protestant Reformation created the individual; but capitalism lived at his expense. The cost, in terms of human personality, has been tremendous. Atomized beings no longer will live in isolation, and so, less out of hope than of some deep longing for emotional security, people are yearning for absorption, for faith. A universal cynicism is turning into a desperate hunger to believe. And on all sides "the callers" for faiths are hawking their wares. We are being flooded with a new theological language, sacred and secular, with talk of 'salvation', 'faith', 'affirmation', 'values'.

Robert M. Hutchins tells of the need of a "moral, intellectual and spiritual revolution . . . the whole scale of values by which our society lives must reversed . . . (it is) . . . the crusade to which we are called." Harold Laski talks of "the regeneration of values and the revitalization of the mind." One calls for a Mediaeval Unifying party the other for a Communist party. And the grotesque reality is that the words are the same, the promises the same; each serves a different Moloch, but the Totalitarian God is the same: A "horrid Moloch" which, in Milton's words, is "besmeared with the blood of human sacrifice and parents' tears."

And Harold Laski is prepared to pay this Moloch's price. That is the monstrous meaning of a new book by him, *Faith, Reason and Civilization*, which has been published in England (Gollancz) and which will be published here by Viking Press sometime in June.

"No doubt as the revolutionary idea has established itself," he writes, "it has involved in those whom it has influenced cruelty and cowardice, dishonesty and disorder. These are part of the price a society is bound to pay which attempts the transvaluation of all values." The "fantastic cruelties" of the Russian regime, as he himself puts it at one point, must be judged, "in their historical proportion.

Those who accept the Christian faith do not regard the stains upon its record as disproof of its insight." The Church promised the 'hereafter;' Laski offers the soothing balm of "history."

Laski's new book approaches on the philosophical level—no, the theological level—the political issues he raised in *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. But this work is of deeper import, for here is he offering a 'social cement' to tie together his political views. One might expect that in a book laying bare his deepest convictions, there would be some careful thought and organization. But the book sprawls in sloppy, disorganized fashion, wordy and repetitious, rhetorical rather than reasoned, shrill rather than factual.

This is not accidental, but an organic defect in the 'political' Laski. His thinking is not geared to persistent problems of human motivation and values, despite the flaunting of scholarship and footnotes, but to the transient play of headlines. "It is impossible to doubt," he writes pontifically, "that the spectacle of Russian heroism in the two years of struggle against Hitlerism has convinced the common man, all over the world, that there was a magic in the Revolution of 1917 somehow adaptable to his own concern. . . . Stalingrad is the resolution of a problem for him that he must solve or die." Yet nowhere in the book, except for two scattered paragraphs, does Laski come to grips with the concrete problem of evaluating and analyzing the Russian regime. The book is not philosophy, but a sermon. In this Canossa to the Kremlin, Laski accepts a secular religion; his aim is to be one of its priests.

Laski's thesis is that the world can no longer live in an "acquisitive society", that it demands a "unifying faith." Our civilization, he writes, is in a state of disintegration comparable to the breakdown of the Roman world. And as Christianity then proved to be a "unifying faith" holding men together in a rational order, so today the Russian Revolution is the *only* faith that can provide a "common basis of living . . . security and hope of happiness."

The idea of Russia assumes the form of a *mystique*, repeated in tom-tom fashion:

It seems to me inescapable that the Russian idea will play the same part as the principles of 1789 in reconstituting the outlook of the next age . . . the Russian idea seems most likely to be the pivotal source from which all values will find the means to renewal . . . they [the Russian leaders] have set on foot a revolutionary remaking of power which has already begun to affect both the human spirit and social institutions something like the force of the Christian revelation two thousand years ago . . . the principles of the Russian revolution have a similar function (to early Christianity) to perform. They have the mysterious power of renovating values, of renewing the faith of man in himself, at a time when the dark shadows seem otherwise like a close about him. . . . They [the Russian leaders] have built, as it were, a temple of refuge for the human spirit where there can be preserved that right to dream, which in the last analysis, is the source of man's power to win his mastery over the hostile forces in the universe. It is, I think, this instinct which the central idea of the Russian Revolution has the capacity to satisfy. . . .

Note the choice of certain words: "mysterious power of renovating values," "temples of refuge," etc. The theological drug is guiding the pen. "Russia" is a luminous Nirvana shining in history.

But is the Russia of 1944, the Russia of 1917? Are the values the same, the hopes men live by the same? After all, October was made in the name of the proletariat; the defense of Stalingrad in the name of Nevsky, Suvorov and Kutusov. But no, the Russian Revolution, for Laski, is a holy idea not bound in space in time. As Sidney Hook remarked of a Hutchins votary, he is "committed to adoration, not analysis."

Laski does venture some concrete remarks about the *operations* of the Soviet system and I have collected all of them. Here they are:

Men cannot in the Russian social order live as parasites upon the efforts of others. . . . It is a fact beyond dispute that the economic system of the Soviet Union has given the ordinary worker the right to a say in the conditions under which he labors. . . . The Soviet Citizen enjoys what may perhaps be termed a democracy of a secondary order, the import of which we must not minimize. He can criticize his foreman or manager; he can protest against the inefficiency of his factory or farm or even Department of State. He can make suggestions which touch the pith of his daily life. . . . The haunting fear of dismissal is not an omnipresent spectre in his home . . .

This is not even worthy of the Dean of Canterbury. "It is a fact beyond dispute . . ." In 1936, Laski wrote a preface to a book by Franz Neumann on *European Trade Unionism*. In a section on Russian labor, Neumann wrote:

They have not even a really socialistic function. By the decree of September 7, 1930, the trade unions were forbidden to interfere with the functions of the factory manager. This decree, therefore, put an end once and for all to the Bolshevik practice of granting the workers the right to industrial collaboration. . . . The similarity of the Italian and Russian situation appeared in similar events. Like Rossoni, Tomsky had to relinquish the leadership of the trade unions. The new policy, by which the trade unions were made subservient to the exigencies of the Five-Year Plan, led to increasingly sharp conflicts . . .

It is a harsh judgment but Laski either is dishonest, writing a propaganda tract for the uninitiated, or he has capitulated completely to a new theology which offers salvation in the "judgments of history." For this suspense of critical theory applies to only part of the book. Several essays are devoted to a fierce and merciless criticism of the role of Christianity today as an instrument of capitalism. In often shrewd and penetrating analysis, Laski tilts at the Catholicism of Christopher Dawson, the Christian ideas of T. S. Eliot, the defeatism of Joyce and the pedantic scholarship of Sir John Clapham. Borrowing heavily from J. M. Robertson, he makes some pertinent historical analogies on the role of religion as a "restraint on the multitude." But coming to Russia, the critical spirit departs.

Not once in the book is there even a mention, let alone an analysis, of a bureaucracy in Russia, the role it plays, or a discussion concerning the new nationalism, or the

emergence of a class state. "The latter [Russia]," he writes, has found a new way of life, faith in which might well play the part supernatural creeds had played elsewhere."

There is a reason why Laski substitutes 'adoration for analysis.' For in him there is the deep will to believe. Laski, like Bliven and other *New Republic* liberals, is the tired radical. He is tired of the constant struggle, of the necessity to analyze and criticize. There is a need for belonging here too, if he is to sustain himself. It is no mere coincidence that Bliven should write an article entitled the "Hang-back Boys" and complain that the radicals still hold to their critical attitudes rather than submerge themselves into mass movements; or that they refuse to recognize that Russia is "one of the dynamic centers of energy" of the world. These men have mesmerized themselves with a myth, and they refuse to distinguish between appearance and reality. The gospels were one thing, the actions of the Church another, this Laski admits from history. But the idea of October and the role of Stalin's Russia are indistinguishable. While Laski excoriates T. S. Eliot for retreating into a form of mystical Anglicism, and flays whole groups who have "fled from the struggle," not once does he come to grips with the bitter analyses made by the poets of Socialist disillusion, Silone, Gide, Dos Passos.

After these two thousand years of betrayal, when the Gospels promised God but the Church brought stagnation, when nationalism promised group pride and dignity and brought war, we would hope that any faith making claim upon us should bring *performance* on earth, not 'vicarious performance' in the heavens or in the future.

But the source of Russia's strength is precisely that it is a religion, with an array of myths, seeking to satisfy a religious hunger. The dividing line which modern society strove to maintain between religious and social facts has disappeared in Russia. The lines separating state from religion, civil administration from 'priesthood', pro-

fane art from sacred art, science from dogma has dissolved. Religious feeling—the veneration of the regime—is at the bottom of all institutions—artistic, literary and scientific. That is what gives it the unity and cohesion.

Laski is one of the heralds of the "age of the word." As music is being reduced to "tunes that can be whistled," ideas are being reduced to phrases that can be sloganized. Laski sits as a high priest of the new religion, fashioning the ideas and slogans—all under the heading of faith. He is assembling the new myths of Moloch.

The sickness Laski displays here is a sickness that is eating deep into modern man. Erich Fromm has characterized it as an "escape from freedom." His analysis, applied to the German intelligentsia and middle class, is just as true for the "radical intelligentsia" who clasp the 'compelling myth' of Bolshevism.

Laski's book is a clinical evidence of Sorel's distinction between Utopias and Myths. A Utopia, Sorel pointed out in a striking letter to Daniel Halevy, can be refuted by showing that its economic system is incompatible with its premises. But myths cannot be refuted because their believers "always picture their coming action as a battle in which their cause is certain to triumph." Laski once believed in Socialist Utopias; the harsh criticisms of the realities of the Soviet earth has driven him to the "compelling myths" and to the peddling of what Plato called "the noble lies." It was Bergson's shrewd insight that in modern times, it is not only religion which dominates the mental life, but the revolutionary myth as well. Laski has demonstrated that the two are becoming one.

Faith, Reason and Civilization undoubtedly will have a profound effect in the liberal world. It is timed to meet the needs of a whole group of people who seek to submerge themselves in "heroic action." Its history, written in a grand manner, provides a smooth assurance for those who are seeking faith and security. But it is not a rhetorical lapse that while Laski speaks constantly of Faith, he never talks of Freedom.

DANIEL BELL

The Anglo-American Condominium

George Padmore

IN any analysis of British Imperialism one salient fact must always be kept in mind: that England without an Empire would be merely a geographical expression, an insignificant island of 46 million people off the fringe of Western Europe. England's world greatness is based upon her imperial structure, chiefly upon India, that brightest jewel in the Crown of the British Raj. For this reason, whatever concessions or modifications the postwar world may witness in colonial reconstruction, no British Government—Tory or Labour—will ever voluntarily relinquish Britain's hegemony over her sources of raw materials, markets, reservoirs of man-power. And this is all the more true as it becomes evident that America will emerge from this war the greatest imperialist nation of the twentieth century, and as such, Britain's chief commercial competitor for the markets of the world. Guided by this principle

of self-interest, she is determined to preserve her status as a great world Power, come what may.

Before this war, Britain drew annual tribute amounting to £200 millions from her overseas investments, which returned to this country in the form of foodstuffs and raw materials. Today, with the loss of a number of her investment sources, British imperialists must cling more strongly than ever to the advantages which a Colonial Empire provides.

Mr. Churchill has frankly stated that he has not assumed the responsibilities of the King's first Minister of State to preside over the liquidation of His Majesty's far-flung imperial dominions. Like all pro-consuls, he believes, as Earl Baldwin once declared that "the British Empire is an instrument of Divine Providence for the promotion of the progress of Mankind."